

Kucinich Subcommittee Expands Probe of NOAA's Office for Law Enforcement

Deputy Director Investigated for Alleged Ethics Violations

Washington D.C. (April 13, 2010) – Chairman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) has sent a letter requesting specific information regarding alleged improprieties involving Mark Spurrier, Deputy Director of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office for Law Enforcement.

In the letter to NOAA's General Counsel and the Assistant General Counsel for Administration at the Department of Commerce, Kucinich cites "information about Mr. Spurrier's conduct in office that raises further serious concerns."

Kucinich's investigation has turned up information that Mr. Spurrier may have improperly provided legal advice to Office for Law Enforcement (OLE) agents and staff on official matters. The letter states, "While Mr. Spurrier is an attorney, his responsibilities at OLE do not include rendering legal advice. Moreover, even if the provision of such advice were within his purview of his appointment, he is not qualified to do so given that his previous career is bereft of experience in either fisheries law or federal resource law enforcement. If the appropriate officials in the Office of the General Counsel for Enforcement and Litigation either did not concur with Mr. Spurrier's advice or were not consulted at all, the implications for OLE's performance would be troubling."

The Subcommittee's investigation has also found evidence that Mr. Spurrier may have maintained an outside legal practice during his employment at OLE without first obtaining proper clearances, as Department of Commerce policy requires. The Kucinich letter states, "Mr. Spurrier would be ineligible to pursue legal work that was either in prohibited categories or was not specifically approved by Department of Commerce."

Kucinich's Domestic Policy Subcommittee held a field hearing last month in Gloucester, Massachusetts to examine problems with enforcement by NOAA's Office for Law Enforcement.

Following the March 2 hearing, Kucinich, along with Representative John F. Tierney (D-MA), demanded internal documents with specific information about potential improprieties relating to

certain activities of OLE senior management including: international travel, hiring practices, accreditation, and potentially illegal destruction of documents.

Since that time the Director for Law Enforcement, Mr. Dale Jones, has been replaced.

Read the full letter [here](#) .

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